



city of
greenville

News Release

CITY DEDICATES RIVERPLACE BELL TOWER AND CARILLON

(Greenville SC) Mayor Knox White was joined this morning by representatives from Hughes Development Corporation, Hughes Investments Inc., the Daniel-Mickel Foundation and the Arts in Public Places Commission, as well as elected officials, community and business leaders, family members and friends for a ceremony to dedicate the new bell tower and carillon at RiverPlace. The tower structure was dedicated in honor of Tommy Wyche, who was selected because of his love of music and lifelong support of downtown Greenville. Organizers concluded the ceremony by playing the bells for the first time, including a song written by Wyche.

The 25 bells of the carillon float within a simple structure of three painted steel columns, the tallest of which is 54 feet. At the foot of the tower is a continuously flowing water feature. The open structure of the bell tower preserves the direct view through the RiverPlace courtyard to the river and to the city beyond. The design and location of the bell tower and carillon were approved by the City's Arts in Public Places Commission and the former Design and Preservation Commission.

According to Mayor White, for decades, Wyche has been instrumental in transforming downtown Greenville, not only from an economic development standpoint, but also as a champion of the arts. Wyche served as the first chairman of Greenville's original arts festival and played key roles in such significant developments as the Heritage Green campus, Greenville Commons, the Peace Center and the Governor's School for the Arts. Wyche also spent 25 years accumulating the property where RiverPlace now stands, fulfilling his vision of an artist-friendly mixed-use development along the Reedy River.

The carillon for the tower was gifted by Harry and Peg van Bergen, who were also in attendance, as a memorial to the acclaimed van Bergen bellfounding family. According to van Bergen, the last of six generations of van Bergen bell founders, the bells were cast in his family's Dutch bellfoundry in Heiligerlee, The Netherlands and have historic significance as they are one of the last sets cast

prior to the foundry's closing in 1980 after 118 years of operation. In March 1939, at age four, van Bergen traveled to the United States with his parents to install two carillons for the World's Fair in New York. One of the carillons was purchased by James C. Self from Greenwood, SC, who asked van Bergen's father to install the carillon at the Callie Self Baptist Church in Greenwood. The family obtained U.S. citizenship in 1950, and in 1955, van Bergen's father established his own bell foundry in Greenwood. Years ago, van Bergen, who was building a house in the Greenville area, read about the RiverPlace development, contacted Hughes Development Corporation and offered to donate the set of bells to the City for the project.

The City will enter into an agreement with RiverPlace for operation of the carillon, including coordination of daily times for the bells to play, as well as for special events.

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Contact: Nancy Whitworth
Deputy City Manager
(864) 467-4401